THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

I

[WHO IS THE BEST DEVOTEE ?]

WHEN M. arrived with Dr. Sarkar at the house at Shyampukur which had been hired for Sri Ramakrishna's treatment,they found the Master seated in his upstairs apartment with a smile on his face, surrounded by devotees. Dr. Bhaduri also was sitting before him.

Dr. Sarcar felt the pulse of Sri Ramakrishna and enquired carefully about his illness. And by and by the conversation turned to matters spiritual.

Bhaduri (*to Dr. Sarcar*) : The fact is, everything is dream-like.

Sarcar : Everything a delusion ? Whose then is this delusion and why ? And why do people talk, knowing it all to be a delusion ? I cannot believe that God is real and the creation is unreal.

Sri R. : This is a good attitude of yours :—'O God, Thou art my Lord, I am Thy servant.' So long as you feel your body to be real, and feel the distinction of 'I' and 'thou,' so long this relation of a servant towards God is really good ; then it is not good to think, 'I am That.'

Further, it is the same thing whether I see a room from a corner of it or from its centre.

Bhaduri (*to Dr. Sarcar*) : Whatever I have said can be found in the Vedanta. But how can you know, unless you study the scriptures ?

Sarcar : Why, did he (Sri Ramakrishna) become so wise by studying the scriptures ? He also says the same thing as you do. Won't it do without reading the Shastras ?

Sri R. : But do you know how often I had heard about these things ?

Sarcar : No, mere hearing is liable to many errors. You have not merely *heard.*

The conversation then took a different turn. Sri Ramakrishna said to Dr. Sarcar, "Is it true that you said that I am mad ? They (*pointing to M. and some other devotees*) are reluctant to go to you for that."

Sarcar : When did I ? But I said that you are egoistic. Why do you allow people to take the dust of your feet ?

M. : If he did not, people would cry.

Sarcar : They should be pointed out their mistake.

M. : Why, does not God dwell in all beings ?

Sarcar : I do not object to that. And in that case you should behave in the same way with all.

M. : But in some men the Divine is manifest in a greater degree. Water exists everywhere, but is manifest in ponds, rivers and seas. Do you have the same respect for a raw Bachelor of Science as for Faraday ?

Sarcar : I accept all this. But why do you call him (Sri Ramakrishna) God ?

M. : Why do we salute each other ? Because God abides in every heart. You have neither experienced nor thought much about these things.

Sri R. (*to Dr. Sarcar*) : God is more manifest in certain beings than in others. I have told you how the rays of the sun reflect one way on earth and trees, and another way on a mirror. They reflect brilliantly on the latter. Take the case of Prahlada. Do you think he and these (the disciples) are equal ? His whole heart and soul was lost in the Lord !

Dr. Sarcar did not reply to this. Sri Ramakrishna said to him after a while, " Well, you feel attracted to this (*i. e.,* Sri Ramakrishna). You told me that you love me."

Dr. Sircar replied : " You are a child of nature, therefore I said so much. They salute you by touching your feet—the sight of it pains me ; and I think they are spoiling a really good soul. The disciples of Kesav Sen did the same thing with him. Just listen to me— "

Sri R. : Litsen to *you ?*—You who are greedy, sensual and egoistic !

Bhaduri : That is to say, you are a *Jiva.* It is the nature of a *Jiva* to have greed for money, name and fame, to be lustful and proud. All *Jivas* have this nature.

Sarcar : All right, if you so want, I shall only test the affections of your throat and go away without meddling in other affairs. If I am to argue, I must speak the truth.

After this, the assembly remained silent for a time. Sri Ramakrishna broke the silence by remarking to Bhaduri, " Do you know, he (Sarcar) is now trying to find the truth by a process of negation. God is neither the *Jivas,* nor the *Jagat,* He is transcendental,—this is how he is reasoning. But after reaching the Truth, when he will come down, he will accept everything as divine........Man at last finds that God Himself has become the twenty-four principles*, even He has become

*The twenty-four categories under which the whole universe is divided.

men. (*To Dr. Sarcar*) There are three kinds of devotees, the lowest, the middle, and the best. The lowest kind say, 'Yonder is God!' They say that the creation is separate from the Creator. The middle class hold that God is *Antaryamin* (The Inner Regulator), living within the heart, and they see Him there. The best kind find that He has become all this, it is He who has become the twenty-four principles, and they find Him filling the whole universe........Study the Gita, the Bhagavatam, the Vedanta and other scriptures, then you will understand all these...Is not God immanent in the universe?"

Sarcar : Yes, He is, He is everywhere, and that is why He cannot be sought for.

The talk then turned on the Master's illness and the danger of its being aggravated through excessive spiritual emotion.

Sarcar (*to Sri Ramakrishna*) : Please control your feelings. I also feel deep emotions, and can dance more than yourselves.

Ch. Naren (*smiling*) : Suppose your emotion becomes stronger, what will you do?

Sarcar : My controlling power also will grow greater.

Sri R. and M. : That is what you *think!*

M. : How can you say what will happen when you are in ecstasy?

The conversation then drifted to money matters. Sri Ramakrishna said to Dr. Sarcar, "I never have any desire for money—You know all that? What?—No, it is no fun!"

Sarcar : Even *I* have no desire for it, what to speak of you! My box lies open, full of money—

Sri R. : Jadu Mallik also was similarly absent-minded. While at meal, he would go on eating whatever was placed before him, well cooked or ill. If

some one would tell him not to take a certain course which was ill prepared, he would exclaim, 'Eh, this curry is bad? Yes, so it is indeed! Ugh!'

Did the Master suggest that there was a world of difference between absent-mindedness due to intense thought of God and that arising out of worldly thoughts?

Pointing to the Doctor, the Master remarked to the devotees, "When a thing is boiled, it becomes soft. He (Doctor) was very 'hard' but now he is softening from within."

Sarcar: A thing when boiled, begins to soften from the outside and not from within. It seems my case is hopeless this time. (*All laugh*).

Before taking his leave, Dr. Sarcar again remonstrated with Sri Ramakrishna, saying, "Can you not forbid people from taking the dust of your feet?"

Sri R.: Can everyone grasp the idea of the Absolute Brahman?

Sarcar: That is no reason why you should not tell them the truth.

Sri R.: There are differences of temperament and capacity.

Sarcar: What are these again?

Sri R: Do you know what are differences of temperament?—Some relish fish as a soup, some as fried, some as a sour preparation, others as *polao*. And this is what is meant by differences of capacity:—I say, first learn to shoot at a plaintain tree, then at a wick, and then shoot a bird on wings.

II

[Instructions to the Householder Aspirant]

And slowly the day ended and it became dark. The Master plunged into a deep meditation. He was so seriously ill! But the illness seemed to be cast off for a time! A few intimate disciples sat watching him. And

for a long time the Master did not rise from his meditation.......

As he came down to the normal plane, the Master said to Mani who was sitting near him, " My mind had been lost in the Absolute Brahman. And then I saw a vision—oh, it is a long story ! I saw Doctor—yes, he will realise, but after some time, he won't require to be told much. And I saw another, and a desire arose in my mind to accept him also. I'll tell you about him afterwards. "*

Sj. Shyam Basu, Dr. Dokari and a few other gentlemen came to see the Master. After some preliminary conversation, Shyam Basu exclaimed, " Ah, what a very beautiful thing you said the other day ! "

Sri R. (*smiling*) : What was that ?

Shyam : I mean your description of the state which is beyond both Ignorance and Knowledge.

Sri R. (*smiling*) : That state is called *Vijnana*. Knowledge of the many is called Ignorance. To know God as existing in all beings is called Knowledge. To know Him *intimately* is called *Vijnana* (Special Knowledge). This Special Knowledge, *Vijnana,* consists in conversing with God and feeling Him as one's own. Wood is combustible, and therefore contains the principle of fire,—to know this is called *Jnana* (Knowledge). But to kindle a fire with the wood, to cook rice over that fire and then to nourish one's body with that rice, is called *Vijnana.*

Shyam (*smiling*) : Also how you narrated the parable of the thorns !

Sri R. (*smiling*) : Yes, just as when a thorn is lodged in our sole, we procure another thorn with which

*Thus in the depths of Samadhi, Sri Ramakrishna would often learn the spiritual potentiality and the future of those who would come to him and guide them accordingly.

we take it out, and then throw both of them away ; similarly in order to drive away Ignorance we acquire Knowledge, and when Ignorance is destroyed, throw both Knowledge and Ignorance away. Then it is called *Vijnana.*

The Master felt pleased with Shyam Basu. The latter was advanced in age and desirous of spending his remaining days in the contemplation of God. Having heard of Sri Ramakrishna he had paid him a visit a few days ago. The Master said to him, " Give up entirely all talk about worldly things. Never speak of any thing except God, and whenever you see a worldly man, leave the place before he reaches you. You have enough experience of the world to understand that it is all hollow. God alone is real, all else is false. He indeed is eternal, all else are evanescent. What is there in the world ? It is like an acid soup prepared of hogplums ; you feel tempted to take it, but what is there in the hogplum ?—only the rind and the stone, and it brings on colic pain when taken ! "

Shyam : Yes, sir, what you say is quite true.

Sri R. : You have been engaged in worldly affairs for many a long year. It won't be possible for you now to meditate on the Lord within the turmoil of the world,—you must repair into solitude. Without solitude, the mind will not become steady and calm. Therefore you must prepare a place for meditation at some distance from your house.

On hearing this, Shyam Basu remained silent, seemingly absorbed in some deep thought. . . Sri Ramakrishna again said to him : " This world is, as it were, a mixture of sand and sugar ; and like the ant, one has to separate the sugar from the sand ; and he indeed is truly clever who can do it. Do you just prepare a solitary place for your meditation. Just do it, I'll also visit it once. "

After a while Shyam Basu asked the Master, " Sir, is reincarnation true ? Has one to be born again ? "

Sri R. : Pray to Him sincerely, He will enlighten you, if He so wills. First be acquainted with Jadu Mallik, then he himself will tell you what wealth and how many houses he has. *It is not good to try to know these things beforehand.* First realise God, then He will let yon know whatever He desires.

Shyam : Sir, man in the world commits many crimes and does many sinful things,—can that man realise God ?

Sri R. : If a man devotes himself to God-realisation towards the close of his life, and dies while practising *sadhana,* calling upon the Lord, when can sin find an opportunity of getting at him ? It is true that the nature of the elephant is such that it will cover itself with mud and dust even after it is washed. But if it is directly taken into the stable as soon as it is bathed, it cannot soil itself any more.

SRI SANKARACHARYA : A STUDY

SWAMI ASOKANANDA

OUR purpose in writing the following lines in celebration of the birthday anniversary of Sri Sankaracharya (which this year fell on the twenty-eighth, April), is to draw the careful attention of the readers of the *Vedanta Kesari* to the deep significance underlying three important facts of his life, which we believe have very useful lessons to impart to us. They are : (A) His birth in a Nambudri family ; (B) His preaching of the Adwaita philosophy ; and (C) The harmony of his rigid monistic outlook with his dualistic practices, such as the installation of Tantrik *chakras* in certain maths and temples, or composition of beautiful devotional hymns in praise of Gods and Goddsses.

[A]

On the surface, the question why he was born of Nambudri parents may apear unmeaning and fatuous. Surely one has no control on where one is born !—it will be said. This is somewhat true of the ordinary man. But tradition has it that great souls like Sankara can predetermine their nativity Without however seeking occult reasons, we shall try to draw out the full significance of the instance in question.

Sankara came to revive the Vedic religion. Naturally his early life required a nurture and environments which were helpful towards the fulfilment of his life's mission. Now, it is well-known that in those days of disintegration, the knowledge of the Vedas was practically unknown in Northern India, and it happened to be conserved and preserved mostly among the South Indian Brahmans. Thus it came about that the Reviver of the Vedic religion found the requisite intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in the home of one who belonged to the most conservative of the communities of the Southern Brahmans.

Nor was it accidental that the Vedic knowledge was found so conserved among the Southern Brahmans. Underlying it, there is a deep truth of the Hindu social evolution. Every society really develops through an interaction of liberal and

conservative forces. In the Hindu society, the Brahmans represent the conservative element, holding sacred and inviolable every tradition and custom, keeping wakeful watch on the frontiers of its dominions against unwarranted entrances and exits, and handing down the wisdom of our fathers seasoned and chastened by the experience of ages, intact to the generations of posterity. The liberal element was typified by the Kshatriyas who unfortunately are now no more existent, and is perhaps functioning through other communities. It inaugurated new reforms and propagated new ideas, but was always respectfully submissive to the veto of the conservative Brahman. Between them was held steady and balanced the helm of the national bark. Neither of them can be allowed to hold unchecked sovereign sway, or eliminated without great peril to the life of the nation. It does not matter which communities represent them ; but they must function in the society. It is extreme ignorance to accuse a particular class for having discharged what is after all a national function. It is simply enacting the ludicrous fable of the stomach and the limbs. As it is, the task of the Brahmans is a thankless one. But when the extreme liberalism of the Buddhistic reform forced the portals of the mother church wide open for all sorts of civilized, semi-civilized and savage races and their indigenous customs and traditions to enter in, had there not been the steadying and controlling influences of conservatism as represented by the Brahmans, Hinduism to-day would have been nowhere, and India's culture and civilisation would have become the pet study of a few Indologists. Indeed without the conservative Brahmans, the Vedic knowledge would have expired and there would not have been a Sankara to resuscitate Hinduism and save it from complete annihilation. Let those who are now for eating up the Brahmans remember that it is rather difficult to walk on one leg.

[B]

We shall next consider the other event : Why Sankara was pre-eminently a teacher of Adwaita philosophy. The obvious reply of course is : Because as a philosopher he thought monism the most correct philosophy and the real objective of the Shastras. We may, however, discern a deeper meaning in his choice of his philosophy, if we look deeper. The

charge is levelled against him that in order to support his own "ism," he has sometimes twisted the legitimate meaning of many Vedic texts. It is true that the Upanishads not only advocate the monistic, but also the dualistic and qualified monistic ideals. Sankara was a great scholar and was certainly expected to know the true purpose of the scriptural texts. If then he chose to emphasise only the monistic aspect of the Shastras, he surely had very valid reasons for so doing. They were, to our thinking, the re-establishment of the ideal of Renunciation and the enunciation of Hinduism in its purest form. Those were days when in the name of religion, most horrid things were practised. Hinduism had to be released from the grips of that terrible ritualism. The revival of Vedic ritualism as inaugurated by Kumarila and other *Karma-kandins,* helped to a certain extent this much-wanted work of purification. But Hinduism could not regain its pristine purity until and unless, it was boldly enunciated that in its essentials, it has nothing whatever to do with rites and ceremonies. How interesting in this connection is the discussion, in Sankara's commentary on the first aphorism of the *Vedanta Darsanam,* on the inter-relation of the Vedic ritualism and *Brahma-Vidya!* This bold stand against ceremonialism is possible to be made by Adwaitism alone,—dualism cannot divest itself absolutely of rites and ceremonies. Similarly, it is monism which is the true basis of the doctrine of renunciation. Though God-realisation is the ideal of all the various sections of Hinduism, and various ways are prescribed as leading to that goal, yet of all those methods of realisation, renunciation—*Tyaga* and *Vairagya*—is held to be an indispensable element.—"By Renunciation alone, man attains to Immortality,"—says the Upanishad. Now, as has been said before, this doctrine of renunciation finds its philosophy in Adwaitism alone. "Brahman alone is true, the world is false"—this dictum is the basis of Renunciation, and this no other philosophy declares. Hence it is that he who came to re-install Hinduism on its ancient pedastal of glory, found in Adwaitism alone his proper instrument. A reviver of Hinduism, a propounder of the ideal of renunciation could not but demonstrate the utter futility and unreality of the world, the antethesis of the Real which is Brahman. For, the moment, any reality, be it dependent on or independent of God, is ascribed to the world, a dual ideal is set before the

mind of man, and consequently the allegiance of his soul undergoes a bipartite division. God *and* a few of the good things of the world,—such becomes the ideal of man, and thus is jeopardised the very soul of Hinduism.

From this, however, it does not follow that all Hindus must become monists. Temperaments will differ and necessitate different religious ideals. Hence dualistic and quasi-monistic ideals are equally valid Hinduism. But the method must in every case be renunciation, there is no other way, no other way! And it is noteworthy that all teachers, of whatever school, have never failed to impress on their followers the need of complete renunciation of the world as an absolute condition of God-realisation.

[C]

This explanation, or rather interpretation of why Sankara preached monism, is corroborated by a singular fact that the teacher who ascribed to Iswara, the Personal God, only a phenomenal existence in his philosophy, was also a writer of some of the most beautiful devotional hymns in praise of Gods and Goddesses, and the terms applied to the Gods and Goddesses in those invocations are often those attributed to Brahman Himself. An attempt is sometimes made to rescue Sankara from this anomalous situation by questioning the genuineness of the hymns themselves. It is argued that Sankara was not responsible for them, they were composed by unknown persons. This is too sweeping a judgment. It may be true of some, but not all the hymns. The fact is that Sankara, though *philosophically* an uncompromising monist (for reasons as set forth in [B]), admitted yet the *equality* of the *religious* value of both monistic and dualistic worship. For him, therefore, there was no such psychological clash as may superficially appear. This synthetic outlook of his, in fact, made him not only the great reviver of Hindu ideals which he was, but also a great constructive power with which was leavened the low rites of worship up to the level of the highest spirituality. In his time the land was full of the worship of various gods and goddesses, bequeathed by decadent Buddhism and sponsored by left-handed Tantrikism. That worship was scarcely conducted with the desire for real spiritual gain, but mostly for acquiring occult powers in order to satisfy the lower instincts of the mind. It had either to be

abolished or reconstituted before the desired reformation of Hinduism could be achieved. True to the genius of Hinduism, Sankara did not wage a destructive war against it, on the other hand, exalted it through a higher interpretation to the level of the highest worship. And soon instead of ministering to the base esoteric purposes of its votaries, it became a potent means of realising the Divine. This interpretative method was one of the essential ways by which Sankara achieved the reformation of our religion so signally within so short a time. His hymns and other dualistic attempts testify only to this reforming activity. This weapōn had been wielded by others before him, but in his hands it became invincible.

And it has not outlived its purpose. This particular aspect of Sankara's reform activities keenly reminds us there are perhaps even now many new modes of worship outside the pale of religion, waiting to be welcomed into its bosom. Shall we never open our eyes ?

Great ones do not die. The ordinary man is forgotten soon after his mortal vesture is consumed in the funeral pyre. But the Shining Ones shine brighter by having passed across the gate of death. The brightest, however, are the spiritual leaders of mankind. They leave messages for all times. Such a one is Sankara. The work of the regeneration of true Hinduism which he inaugurated twelve centuries ago is not yet done. It is only half accomplished. May his blessings empower us to push forward with his divine mission !

SWAMI ASOKANANDA

SHAKTHI : WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B. A., B. L.

THE word " Shakthi " is largely and grossly misunderstood in India and abroad. Some persons call it " lust and mummery and magic. " Others call it " force " or " power. ' Yet others regard it as a form of materialism. There are others who regard it as a call to license and licentiousness. All these views are based on sheer misconception or ignorance or perversity. There are others who set up conflicts among *Srutis, Smrithis, Puranas* and *Agamas* and regard them as contradictory or irreconcilable or even mutually exclusive. Some others try to reconcile them by assigning one of them to each Yuga. Some Tantras thus appropriate the Kali Yuga to themselves and throw the other Pramanas overboard. We must know the true meaning of such passages. Their object is only to increase the faith in that Sadhana for that Sadhaka. Arya Dharma is inclusive and perfect and complete. He who quarrels with his brother Hindu for its sake is ignorant of its essence. *Dharma* means the law of true being by which such being is realised and expressed and maintained. It is the state of equilibrium attained by the expression of the true and innermost nature. Such effort to maintain such equilibrium involves the element of order (representing the level attained) and the element of progress (representing the crescent triumph over obstacles yet remaining and obstructing the true expression of such nature). Such perfect self-expression over true nature and such perfect harmonious inter-relations of beings can be only in the *Sudha Sattwa* or *Aprakrita* Paradise. In all the Trigunamaya worlds there will be greater or lesser attainment of equilibrium. Such forward and backward surge and resurgence are expressed by the Indian conception of Yugas. The general feature of Aryan Dharma is this great truth that the true nature of our being should be realised as *Sachchidananda,* the *sadhana* or means being the carrying out of Dharma in a spirit of Karma Yoga.

From this common centre, a number of radii branch out towards the infinite. The Indian conceptions of *Ishta*

Sadhana and *Ishta Devata* account for the seeming multiplicity, nay the seeming confusion and chaos, of Hinduism. There are numerous schools of Indian philosophy (Adwaita, Visishtadwaita, Dwaita, Sudhadwaita, etc.). There are numerous devotional cults (Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism, etc.). There are innumerable *yogic sadhanas, mantras, mudras, tantrika vidyas* or *upasanas, vaidika vidyas* or *upasanas,* sacrifices, magical words and mystical syllables, etc. Each sect praises itself and abuses others. In this bewildering confusion there must surely be a way which a man who is sick of the blatant noises of the vendors of rival nostrums can find and use for his soul's truest and highest auspiciousness.

One great truth is that each sect's positive affirmations are true from its agnle of vision. But its negations and exclusions and angry mud-slingings on other sects and their doctrines are generally wrong. I have tried to show in my book on *Bhagawad Gita : The Divine Path to God,* the only perfect and divine synthesis of Hindu Dharma as uttered by God Himself. Just as Sri Krishna has the entire universe of souls and objects as His body, so the Gita has the entire cosmos of the universal cults and philosophies and religions as its body.

In Shaktism the Divine Principle is worshipped in the form of Shakthi or Devi. God's *prema* and *daya* (love and compassion) are felt by us more intimately in our conception of the Motherhood of God than in our conception of the Fatherhood of God. The Supreme Parabrahma is called Siva. His Shakthi or Devi is His aspect of Love to the universe. Such Shakthi is the mother of mind as well as of matter. It has the aspects of *Ichcha Shakthi, Jnana Shakthi* and *Kriya Shakthi.* In Her supreme *Mayamaya* or *Sudha Sattwa* or *Aprakrita* form She is the Mahadevi from whom even the Trimurthis emerge by way of manifestation. All the thirty-six Tattwas from Moola Prakrithi (primordial matter) to the Pancheekrita Brahmanda (the manifested cosmos) proceed from Her and by the power of Her will (*Sankalpa*). The Tamo Guna predominates in them. The Rajo Guna predominates in the *avidya* sheaths, the selves embodied in which are called jivas. The true nature of each self is *Sachchidananda.* The true human evolution is in the direction of increasing *Sattwa Guna* till the perfection of *Sadhanas* results in our *Mukthi* by the attainment of the lotus

feet of the Devi. If we seek the *Nirguna Brahma Sakshatkara,* it will be Her gift to us. That is why She is called in *Lalita Sahasranama* as *Sivajnana Pradayini.*

Thus the Tantras are amplifications of the Vedic Truth from another angle of vision. *Tantra* is derived from *tan* (extension) and *tra* (saving), and thus it means the body of doctrine which is an extension of the Vedic doctrine and which gives additional *sadhanas* which are simple and sure and sweet for the attainment of God-realisation. Further, Tantrika Sadhanas are open to all castes and to both sexes. They were not meant to displace or supplant Vaidika Sadhanas but to supplement them. They are Shaktha or Saiva or Vaishnava according as the Saguna Brahma aspect described is Devi or Siva or Vishnu. The source of them all is in the *Devi Sukta* of Rig Veda and in the one hundred and eight Upanishads among which are found Adwaita and Saiva and Vaishnava and Shaktha doctrines and *sadhanas.* When the Agamas themselves claim to be based on the Vedas and when their Revealer is the same Paramatma who gave the Sruthis, what right have we to abuse the Agamas or to damn the Sruthis with faint praise and assign them away to Krita Yuga ?

It is thus wrong to import any concept of sex into the Supreme. The Shakthi Tantras worship the Saguna Brahma as having an *aprakrita* or a *suddha sattwa* female form. Why should the Saguna Brahma be compelled to have a masculine form alone ? The Shaktha *sadhanas* or *samskaras* (sacraments) are an extension and a supplement of *Vaidika sadhanas* and *samskaras.*

In short, the Shakthi Tantra fulfils and completes the Vedic ideas about what is called *Maya* (or *Prakriti* or *Avidya*). The matrix is *Chit Sakthi* or *Suddha Sattwa* or *Maya* or *Aprakrita Sakthi.* When Tamo Guna is predominent we call it matter. When Rajo Guna is predominent we call it *Jiva* ;. and when Sattwa Guna is predominent we call it divinity. When pure *Sattwa* is absolutely manifested, we call it Parameswara. The Atman in the state of self-identifying relation to mind and senses and body is called Jiva. Chit Sakthi is thus higher than the Trigunamaya manifestation of *Shakthi.* It is not a negation of our ordinary consciousness ; but it is a completion, a fulfilment, a trans-

cendence of our consciousness. It is pure being and conciousness and bliss (*Sachchidananda*). It is Saguna in relation to the universe and Nirguna in itself. From the standpoint of the Absolute there is eternal Sachchidananda and the Vivarta Vada alone applies. From the standpoint of the *Jiva,* the Chit Shakthi of Para Brahman is the cause of the eternal being of Saguna Brahma, and God's Maya Shakthi projects the universe of name and form. Here the Parinama Vada applies. Maya Shakthi is the cosmic seed whence has come this wonderful cosmic *aswatha* (banyan) tree. The same is the *mental* Shakthi that cognises the universe and also the Prana Shakthi which holds the mind and the senses and the body in a state of integration. *Maya* or *Mula Prakriti* or *Avyakta* (whichever we hold to be the proper name) manifests itself as the three Gunas (*Vikritis*) whence have come mind and life and matter as three lives of evolution. As we rise from plane to plane of *Shakthi* our realisation rises from pluralism to dualism and thence to monism. The Gunas are self-veiled aspects of *Chit.* When we rise to the plane of *Chit,* all the disintegrations seen from the plane of Gunas disappear and we enjoy eternal and infinite Sachchidananda.. Just as science has pushed the seemingly solid walls of matter and shows matter to be only a mode of energy, so religion has pushed the seemingly solid walls of energy and shows energy only to be a mode of self-veiled Sachchidananda.

It is thus clear that Shaktism is in a line with the highest Vedic thought. There may be minor differences between it and other schools of Vedic thought. But it has certainly as honourable and honoured a shrine in the Vedic temple as any other shrine of thought therein. It, however, specially emphasises the aspect of *sadhanas, mantra, mudra, lakshya, yoga,* etc. *Mantra* is not mere meaningless chatter or jabber. It is a means of Divine realisation. Akasa is the primary energy. Mantra is a means of setting up in it harmonious and divine vibrations. *Sabda* is the *guna* or quality of Akasa, air being only a means of its transmission. Conceived in this way the efficacy of divine mantras becomes quite easy of comprehension. Sound has a supersubtle, subtle, half-manifested, and a fully manifested form (*Para, Pasyanthi Madhyama,* and *Vaikhari* forms). In each divine mantra is stored up primal energy which can be realised by us from highest spiritual good. In the same way the Shaktha

ritual and worship have the same purpose and result. Its methods of Pranaprathishta in the case of images are peculiar to it. Its use of *yantras* is another peculiarity. Its use of *nyasa* and *mudra* are other peculiarities. These upasana elements are perfected into Parabhakthi or Parajnana (which are really one in essence). The Shaktha doctrine emphasises also the importance of Raja Yoga and Laya Yoga besides stressing Hatha Yoga and Mantra Yoga.

Thus the Shaktha doctrine is full of beauty and purity and holiness. It has come into bad odour because of its *Vama Marga* aspect and the use of the five *makaras* in the latter. But the *Vama* aspect is stated in the *Agastya Sutras* to be open to the classes to whom flesh and wine are not for bidden while the *Dakshina* aspect is for those classes who have given them up as forbidden. Further, *Vama Marga* is for those who have attained purity and mantra siddhi and go through the ritual for rituals' sake and not for indulging in forbidden delights in a spirit of passion. Further, it is a means of purifying natural passion by introducing into it a divine principle. After all true Shakthism aims at reaching Devi and not at attaining physical enjoyment. The worship has to rise to the real and higher five *makaras* which are psychical states and not physical things at all. Just as in Vaidika karmas there are rituals free from meat, etc., and rituals not free from meat, etc., so also we have two varieties of Tantrik rituals. There is a passage in the Srimad Ramayana in which Sri Rama says : "*Yadannah Purusho Bhavathi Tadannastasya Devatah*" (Whatsoever food a man takes, that food is what his deity accepts)—(*Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga* 102). Whatever might be the excuses offered or occult explanations given in respect of Panchamakara, the sooner meat and wine and sexuality (*mamsa, madya and maithuna*) are divorced from the company of *mantra* and *mudra*, the better it will be for *Shakthism*.

Thus true *Shakthism* is true spirituality. It has a specially attractive appeal because of its emphasis on the Motherhood of God. Its philosophy is subtle and comprehensive and its *sadhanas* are varied and catholic and inclusive. In short *Shakthi* is not a mere force or power in the physical sense. It is the power of renunciation of the fruits of actions, the power of service, the power of concentration, the power

of devotion, the power of realised knowledge, the power of love, the power of transcendental being, the power of transcendental consciousness, and the power of transcendental bliss. To use the lovely and holy words of *Lalita Sahasranama*, *Chit Kala Ananda Kalika Prema Rupa Priyamkari*.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B. A., B. L.

GLEANINGS

INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM ON VEDANTA*

NARMADASHANKAR D. MEHTA

(1) *Allegations of Covert Buddhism in Vedanta.*

During my studies of Indian Philosophy I was struck by the accusation of "Covert Buddhist" brought against Sankaracharya the first exponent of the Modern School of Vedanta. The popular belief among the followers of Sankaracharya is that he was a strong opponent of Buddhism; that the Buddhists were routed from India by his elder contemporary Kumarila—a Mimamsaka; and that what little influence of Buddhism was left in India after the death of Kumarila was wiped off by the teaching of Sankara based on the texts of the Upanishads, the Gita and the Brahma Sutras. The charge of "Covert Buddhist" brought against Sankara is thus apparently incongruous with the popular belief that he was an opponent of Buddhism. But the fact persists that the orthodox interpreters of the Prasthanatraya (trio of Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutra) regard the Maya Vada of Sankara as a heresy engrafted on the teaching of the Veda from the Buddhistic plant. The intellectuals of India have all along believed against the popular view that Sankara's interpretation of the three Canonical books of the Vedanta is altogether a new interpretation which violates the natural sense of the texts. I intend to discuss in this paper what are the *prima facie* grounds for holding that Sankara's School of Vedanta is "Covert Buddhism".

(2) *Allusions in Padmapurana to the novel interpretation of the Veda.*

The earliest reference to this accusation is to be found in the Padmapurana (Uttara Khanda 264-69-75).

Although the exact date by which the Padmapurana in its present form was compiled is not ascertainable, it is approximately correct to believe that this Purana was codified prior to the tenth century when Buddhism was really extinct in India, and when Pauranic form of Hinduism had established itself in full force. The idea that the Vedic ritual was unnecessary for securing salvation as propounded by the new School of Vedanta was an innovation in Hinduism, and the Purana alludes to the doctrine as a heresy. The following is a free rendering of the text of the Padma Purana.

"The Buddhistic Sastra was propounded by God Vishnu incarnated in the form of Buddha for the purpose of destroying demons. It is a false doctrine and is a naked or overt heresy. There is also another

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Sastra based on the doctrine of Illusion which is called a Covert Buddhistic doctrine. It has been covertly taught, oh dear (Parvati), *in this Kali age by God in a Brahman form*. In this latter Sastra the doctrine that the Vedic ritual ought to be abandoned—a position which is contrary to the Vedic texts and which is hated by the people—is propounded. The renunciation of all action is nothing but irreligion. Again in this Sastra the doctrine of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Being is expounded by me (God Siva); the essential nature of Brahman as devoid of all attributes is also taught by me in the Kali age which is for the deception of the whole world. This Maha Sastra which is non-Vedic on account of Maya is preserved by me like the Veda for the destruction of the world."

दैत्यानां नाशनार्थाय विष्णुना बुद्धरूपिणा ।
बौद्धशास्त्रमसत्प्रोक्त ननिनीलयशोदकम् ॥ ६९ ॥
मायावादमसच्छास्त्रं प्रच्छन्नं बौद्धमुच्यते ।
तथैव कथितं देवि कलौ ब्राह्मणरूपिणा ॥ ७० ॥
अपार्थश्रुतिवाक्यानां दर्शयँ लोकगर्हितम् ।
कर्मस्वरूपत्याज्यत्वमत्रैव प्रतिपाद्यते ॥ ७१ ॥
सर्वकर्मपरिभ्रष्टं वैधर्म्यत्वं तदुच्यते ।
परेशजीवयोरैक्यं मयातु प्रतिपाद्यते ॥ ७२ ॥
ब्रह्मणोऽस्य स्वयं रूपं निर्गुणं वक्ष्यते मया ।
सर्वस्य जगतोऽप्यत्र मोहनार्थं कलौ युगे ॥ ७३ ॥
वेदार्थवन्महाशास्त्रं मायया यदवैदिकम् ।
मयैव रक्ष्यते देवि जगतां नाशकारणात् ॥ ७४ ॥

The above text of the Purana in the mouth of Siva, teaching his wife Parvati, produces two impressions, prevailing among the masses of the times: (1) That the Buddha was then regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu, and yet the Buddha Shastra was considered to be *naked* heresy by the orthodox Hindus. (2) That Sankara (referred to as a Brahmana) was regarded as the incarnation of Siva, and the Maha Shastra—the doctrine of the Mahayana School of Buddhism—engrafted on the Vedic text was considered to be covert heresy.

This is the clear interpretation of the Pauranic text. The word "Maha Shastra" is significant. The Vedantic idealism had its immediate predecessor in the *Vijnanavada* of the Yogachara School, and the doctrine of Illusion was the direct outcome of the Madhyamic doctrine as propounded by Nagarjuna—a Buddhist.

(3) *Bhaskara Bhatta's attack on Sankara's interpretation of the Brahma Sutras.*

The first orthodox opponent of Sankara's School of Vedanta was Bhatta Bhaskara who flourished in the latter half of the tenth century A. D. His commentary on the Brahma Sutras has been recently rescued

and published in the Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series. This Bhaskara's School is known as Bhedabhedavada or the doctrine of (One) Unity and (many) multiplicity of Brahman as equally *real*. When Sankara was a pure monist, Bhaskara was both a monist and a pluralist. Sankara regarded Brahman or the Absolute as the only Reality of a conscious nature ; and treated the world as a mere phantom or appearance on that Absolute Real. The empirical world was superimposed upon the Real Brahman through Avidya Maya and it had no real existence apart from Brahman. Bhaskara thought that the Vedic teaching was neither monistic nor pluralistic. The causal state of Brahman was regarded as unity ; while the evolved nature of Brahman in the form of the phenomenal world was regarded as multiplicity. But the unity and multiplicity were both equally real. The cause and effect are two aspects of the one and the same substance and we have no reason to suppose that the effect is illusory while the cause alone is real. Bhaskara was, therefore, a pure evolutionist (Parinamavadi) and not a mere phenomenalist (Vivarthavadi) like Sankara. There are two distinct allusions to foreign influence on Sankaracharya in Bhaskara's commentary on Brahma Sutra. He opens his commentary with a remark:—

(1) " I have taken up the work of explaining this Sastra with the sole object of removing the impression of erroneous interpretation put on the text by some who hide the true sense of the aphorisms, and who prominently bring out their own views in interpretation."

(2) Again while commenting on Brahma Sutra (1-4-26) Bhaskara lays great stress on the word *Parinama* occuring in the sutra *Athmakritha Parinamath*—Brahman is the inherent cause of the universe (and not merely an instrumental cause) because it is evolved in the form of the world by its innate activity—and adds that " Those who propound the theory of Illusion or Maya from the Brahma Sutras are spinning out the theory like the Gathas of the Mahayanic Buddhists which have no authentic text behind their back, and are thereby deceiving the people." Again, " those Mayavadis who are Buddhistic in their doctrine should be considered to have been refuted by this very argument by the Sutrakara himself."

(4) *Vijnanabhikshu (A. D. 1650) regards the Mayavada of Vedanta as Buddhistic.*

* सूत्राभिप्रायसंवृत्या स्वाभिप्रायप्रकाशनात्
व्याख्यातं यैरिदं शास्त्रं व्याख्येयं तन्निवृत्तये ॥
तथाच वाक्यं परिणामस्तु स्यादध्यादिवत्—इति
विच्छिन्नमूलं महायानिकबौद्धगाथयितं मायावादं
व्यापर्णयन्तो लोकान्व्यामोहयन्ति ॥
ये तुबौद्धमतावलंबिनो मायावादिनस्तेऽप्यनेन
न्यायेन निरस्ता वेदयितव्या ॥ १ ॥

The Sankhya—Patanjala philosopher, Vijnanabhikshu, both in his commentaries on Sankhya and Yoga Sutra texts as well as in his inde-

pendent commentary on Brahma Sutras called Vijnanamrita distinctly points out that Maya Vada is a new element of " Modern Vedantists." Apart from Vijnanabhikshu's position, all Schools of Vedanta of the Dvaitins, Visishtadvaitins and Suddhadvaitins as represented by Madhva, Ramanuja and Vallabha respectively, are unanimous in holding that the author of the Brahma Sutras was an Evolutionist, (*Parinamavadi*), and not a Phenomenalist (*Vivarthavadi*) as Sankara tries to represent them.

(5) *Buddhistic elements in Vedanta are*

(*a*) Mayavada or Vivartavada, Doctrine of Illusion or Phenomenalism.

(*b*) Ajativada or Proudhivada Doctrines of "non-creation" or Absolutism.

I do not wish to enter into the question as to whether Mayavada has its germs in the Upanishads or its basis in the Brahma Sutras. Suffice it to say for our present purposes that, although Mayavada may be the logical outcome of the Vijnanavada or Idealism of the Upanishads, its full statement in a philosophical manner is to be found for the first time in Sankara's Vedantic doctrine. Between the Upanishadic period and Sankara's period nearly twenty centuries have intervened. Some fourteen centuries of this long period have seen the rise and fall of Buddhism i India prior to Sankara's birth. This long period of Buddhistic culture has metamorphosed the Brahmanic form of Religion and Philosophy into its modern Puranic form of Religion and Vedantic view of Philosophy.

Now it is a recognised fact on all hands that Sankaracharya obtained his Sanyasa Diksha from Govindacharya; but he got his philosophic training from his grand Guru, Gauda Pada, the author of the well-known Mandukya Karikas. He is reported to have spent about 12 years with Gauda Pada before he wrote his Brahma Sutra Bhashya. Gauda Pada was an eminent scholar of the Sankhya School of Philosophy. His Bhashya on Ishwarkrishna's Sankhya Karikas is well known. He is also the author of Sakti Sutras which are not publised. But there are distinct allusions thereto in Bhaskararai's commentary on Lalita Sahasranama. I have obtained a copy of the Sutras from a Sanyasi friend and I find that the Sutras embody the Sakta Cult of Advaitic type. I am also informed by the same ascetic that the stanzas quoted by Sankara, at the end of his commentary on the first four aphorisms, in support of his view, are an extract from the Gauda Pada Bhashya on the Brahma Sutras, a copy of which is reported to have been preserved in the Bagal Math in Southern India. I have not been able to verify the last statement. But one thing is certain viz. Sankara regards Gauda Pada as a repository of Advaitic doctrine and refers to him with great reverence. In the concluding stanzas of his Bhashya on the Mandukya Karika, Sankara distinctly states that his grand Guru has rescued the Advaita nectar from the Vedic ocean.

This Gauda Pada—an all-round scholar, a Sankhya, a Tantrika and Vedantic of the idealistic school of the 8th Century—has imbibed

the Mahayanik Buddhistic teaching both in the letter and the spirit from his predecessors. Great Buddhistic teachers of the Vijnanavada and Madhyamika Schools preceded Gauda Pada. They were Nagarjuna (250-320 A. D.) Maitreya (400 A. D.), Asanga (405-470 A. D.) and Vasubandhu (410-490 A. D.). The original Sanskrit texts of the Mahayana literature of the above Buddhistic thinkers have been lost for the most part. But the text of Nagarjuna's Madhyamika Karikas has been preserved.

What Nagarjuna is to the Madhyamika school of Buddhism, Gauda Pada is to the Kevaladvaita school of Vedanta. Nagarjuna (250—320 A. D.) was born at Vidarbha (modern Berar) in Mahakosol during the reign of Satavahana of the Andhra dynasty. He was not only a Buddhist but a Tantrik too. He was also recognised as an alchemist of the Saiva School or Rasa Darsana. He was one of the early patrons of the University of Nalanda. Lama Taranath says that Nagarjuna was a contemporary of King Nemichandra who is supposed to have reigned about 300 A. D. The latest date which can be assigned to Nagarjuna is 400 A. D. when his biography was translated into Chinese by Kumara Jiva. His philosophic works are :—

1. *Madhyamika Karika,*
2. *Vigrahav Vyavartana Karika,*
3. *Pramana Vidhvansana,* and
4. *Upaya Koushalya Hridaya Sastra.*

The original Sanskrit texts of Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are lost for ever. The text of No. 1 has been rescued and published in the Bibliotheca Buddhica Series as Serial No. IV. The study of Nagarjuna's Karikas with the help of Chandrakirti's comments reveals that Gauda Pada who flourished in the eighth century of the Christian Era got his inspiration of Maya Vada and Ajati Vada from Nagarjuna. I shall presently show how the very words of Gauda Pada (8th century) are borrowed from Nagarjuna (4th century) :—

Nagarjuna's Karika (4th Century)

(१) नागार्जुन अनिरोधमनुत्पादमनुच्छेदमशाश्वतम्
अनेकार्थमनानात्वं अनागममनिर्गमम्
यः प्रतीत्य समुत्पादं प्रपंचोपशमं शिवम्
देशयामास संबुद्धस्तं वंदे वदतांवरम् 1—1
प्रपञ्चयति ये बुद्धम् प्रपञ्चाति तमप्ययम्
ते प्रपञ्चकृता, सर्वे न पश्यंति तथागतम् ॥

Gauda Pada's Karika (*8th century*)

गौडपाद प्रपंचोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थं
मन्यते स आत्मा सविज्ञेय: मांडूक्य 3–7
वीतरागभयक्रोधैर्मुनिभिर्वेदपारगै:
निर्विकल्पो ह्ययंदृष्ट: प्रपंचोपशमोऽद्वय: ॥ II–34
ज्ञानमाकाशकल्पे न धर्मान्यो गगनोपमान्
ज्ञेया भिन्नेन संबुद्धस्तं वंदे द्विपदां वरम् IV–1

२ नागा. यथा माया यथा स्वप्ने गंधर्वनगरं यथा
तथोत्पादस्तथास्थानं तथा भंग उदाहृत: ॥ VII–34
क्लेशा: कर्माणि देहाश्चकर्तारश्च फलानिच
गंधर्वनगराकाश मरीचिस्वप्नसंनिभा ॥ XVII–33

गौड. स्वप्नमाये यथा दृष्टे गंधर्वनगरं यथा
तथा विश्वमिदंदृष्टं वेदान्तेषु विचक्षणै: II–31

३ नागा. स्वभाव कृतकोनाम भविष्यतिकथं पुन: ।
अकृत्रिम: स्वभावोहि निरपेक्ष परत्रच XV–2
यद्यस्तित्वं प्रकृत्यास्यान्नभवेदस्यनास्तिता
प्रकृतेरन्यथा भावो नहि जातूपपद्यते ॥ XV–8

गौड. स्वभावेनामृतो यस्याभावो गच्छति मर्त्यताम्
कृतकेनामृतस्तस्य कथं स्थास्यतिनिश्चल: ॥ II–22
न भवत्यमृतं मर्त्यं नमर्त्यममृतं तथा ।
प्रकृतेरन्यथा भावो न कथंचिद् भविष्यति ॥ II–21

४ नागा नस्वतोजायते भाव: परतो नैवजायते ।
न स्वत: परतश्चैव जायते ज्ञायते कुत: । XIX–13
न स्वतो नाऽपिपरतो द्वाभ्यांवा नाप्यहेतुत: ।
उत्पन्ना जातु विद्यंते भावा: क्वचनकेचन ॥ I–1

गौड. स्वतोवा परतोवाऽपि न किंचिद्वस्तु जायते ।
सदसत्सदसद्वापि न किंचिद् वस्तु जायत ॥ IV–22

५ नागा. शून्यमाध्यात्मिकं पश्य पश्य शून्यं बहिर्गतम्
न विद्यतेसोऽपिकश्चिद्यो भावयति शून्यताम् ॥ P–348
अपरप्रत्ययं शांतं प्रपंचैरप्रपंचितम्
निर्विकल्प मनानार्थमेतत्तत्त्वस्य लक्षणम् ॥ XVIII–9

गौड. तत्त्वमाध्यात्मिकं दृष्ट्वतत्त्वं दृष्ट्वा तुबाह्यत:
तत्त्वीभूतस्तथारामस्तत्त्वादप्रच्युतोभवेत् ॥ II–38

६ नागा. निर्ममो निरहंकारो यश्चसोऽपिनविद्यते
निर्ममं निरहंकारं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ v 1. XVIII–3

गौड. निस्तुतिर्निनमस्कारो निःस्वधाकार एवच
चलाचल निकेतश्च यतिर्यादृच्छिको भवेत् ॥ II–37

७ नागा. अस्तीति शाश्वतग्राहो नास्तीत्युछेद्‌दसर्शनम्
तस्माद्‌स्तित्वनास्तित्वे नाश्रीयेत विचक्षणः ॥
यद्‌स्तियत्स्वभावेन न तन्नास्तीतिशाश्वतम्
नास्तीदानीमभूत्पूर्वमित्युच्छेदः प्रसज्यते ॥ XV–10
अस्तित्वं येतुपश्यति नास्तित्वं चाल्पबुद्ध्यः
भावानां ते य पश्यंति द्रष्टव्योपशमं शिवम् ॥ V–8

गौड. अस्तिनास्त्यस्तिनास्तीतिनास्तिनास्तीतिवापुनः ।
चलस्थिरो यथा भावैरावृणोत्येव बालिशः ॥
कोठ्यश्चतस्र एतत्स्तु ग्रहैर्यासा सहावृतः
भगवानाभिरस्पृष्टो येन दृष्टः स सर्वदृक् IV–83, 84

८ नागा. द्वेसत्ये समुपाश्रित्यबुद्धानां धर्मदर्शना
लोकसंवृतिसंत्य चत्यं च परमार्थतः ॥

गौड. उपलंभात्समाचाराद्‌स्तिवस्तुत्ववादिनाम्
जातिस्तुदेशिता बुद्धैरजातेस्त्रसतां सदा ॥
योऽस्ति कल्पितसंवृत्या परमार्थेननास्त्यसौ
परतंत्राभिसंवृत्या स्यान्नास्ति परमार्थतः I–73

I have selected only eight texts of Nagarjuna and Gauda Pada in parallel columns to show the influence of Buddhistic Vijnana Vada on Vedantic Theory.

Turning to the first text we may note that in the Madhyamika School of Buddhism the two extremes of philosophic thought are avoided and a middle course is adopted. Just as in the religion of ethics, virtue is the mean, so Nagarjuna says that Philosophical truth lies in the middle path. The term Madhyamika is defined as under :—

अतो भावा भावान्तद्वयरहितत्त्वात्सर्वस्वभावानुत्पत्तिलक्षणा शून्यता मध्यमा प्रतिपद् मध्यमो मार्ग इत्युच्यते.

That is the Buddhistic middle path in which there is neither the extreme of existence nor the extreme of non-existence. In its path a middle consciousness is recognised in which each object is essentially regarded as unproduced. This kind of consciousness in which extremes are avoided is called Sunyata or middle conviction.

In the first text Nagarjuna propounds a theory based on the Buddha's own teaching that the phenomenal world (*Prathisya Samuthpatha*—dependent origination) has neither cessation nor creation, is

neither destructible nor indestructible, is neither one nor many, is neither appearing nor disappearing. The essential nature of things according to Nagarjuna is devoid of all conceptual limitations of (1) Cessation, (2) Creation, (3) Non-eternity, (4) Eternity, (5) Unity, (6) Multiplicity, (7) Coming, and (8) Going. This transcendental principle is called Shunyata by Nagarjuna, while Gauda Pada calls it as Advaita or Turiya Brahman. Nagarjuna renders homage to that illumined teacher (Sambuddha) who taught the middle course ; Gauda Pada too reveres his Guru in exactly the same words. Both are idealists Nagarjuna being a subjective idealist, Gauda Pada being an absolute idealist.

The element of idealism is common to Buddhistic and Vedantic thought. It may be noted that although Nagarjuna's allusion is directly to Gautama Buddha, Gauda Pada leaves us in doubt as to who that best man (*Dvipadamvaram*) is, although Dasgupta is inclined to believe that Gauda Pada refers to Gautama Buddha. The interpretation of Sankara and Anundajnana makes us believe that Gauda Pada refers to Narayana in the verse. But the words indicate that Gauda Pada refers to a *human* teacher and not to a *mythical* sage or god like Narayana. Most probably Gauda Pada refers to Suka Yogindra—his direct Guru and not to Narayana or Gautama Buddha.

Turning now to the second text, Nagarjuna's teaching and Gauda Pada's teaching are identical. Both regard the world as illusory or unreal like a dream or an illusory appearance of a City in Heavens. Gauda Pada here directly teaches Maya Vada and asserts that the Upanishad texts establish the same doctrine. Here lie the germs of Sankara's regular Maya Vada. In the third text we find the common teaching of Buddhism and that the essential or nominal nature cannot be converted into apparent or phenomenal nature. Reality and appearance, essence and form are not interchangeable. Both the thinkers agree that immortality cannot be established on a theory of transformation of substance.

In the fourth text the doctrine of Ajati Vada or non-creation of the world is propounded. The original principle cannot be turned into the world by its own inherent power or through the influence of any other element. In fact nothing is generated or produced but the underlying principle only appears in a variety of ways. This is the Buddhistic Sunyata and Vedantic Vivarta.

In the fifth text we find similarity of thought but Nagarjuna expresses the principle by negation (Sunyata) while Gauda Pada expresses the same as assertion (Tatva). The difference in thought lies in the fundamental difference in the doctrine of Buddhism and Vedanta. The former is concerned with the *ethical* aspect of human activities and terminates in *Nirvana* or extinction of human sufferings while the latter is concerned with the *Metaphysical* aspect of human intellectual activities and consequently terminates in *Kaivalya* or residuum of pure consciousness. Buddhists do not hazard to express the nature of Nirvana beyond the extinction of mundane existence ; while the Vedantists go a step further and state that there is an ultramundane existence revealed

in a state of liberation. It will not be amiss here to state that great confusion has arisen on account of mis-interpretation of the word, Sunyata, of *Nagarjuna. It is doing injustice to* Nagarjuna to say that he taught Nihilism pure and simple, when he directly advocates Madhyamapartipad or middle consciousness as his goal. I should like to quote Nagarjuna's own words in support of my view : He says :

शून्यता सर्वं दृष्टीनां प्रोक्ता निःसरणंजिनैः ।
येषांतु शून्यता दृष्टिस्तानसाध्यान् बभाषिरे ॥ (XIII–8)

By "Sunyata " is meant by ethical veterans, a state in which variety of aspects disappears. But those whose view is turned into obsolute vacuum are regarded as irremediable or incurable maniacs.

In the sixth text we have an identity of conception about the philosophical Knower.

In the seventh text we find the teaching of " middle path." Nagarjuna says that in the doctrine of Realism there is the perverse notion of eternity, *while in the doctrine of Nihilism there is the* extreme view of annihilation. A wise man should not resort to either extreme. Gauda Pada says that the Divine self is untouched by the notions of existence, non-existence, etc. He is the wise man who sees his self as devoid of these notions.

In the eighth text we gather the principle of relative and absolute truth, recognised both by Nagarjuna and Gauda Pada. The Samvrat Satya and Parmarth Satya have in post-Sankara Vedanta been known as Vyavahara Satya and Paramartha Satya.

Apart from the above identity in *thought* between the Buddhistic thinker Nagarjuna and Vedantic teacher Gauda Pada we have clear *traces of Buddhistic terminology in Gauda Pada's* Karikas used in support of Vedantic theory :—

कल्पित न संवृतिसत्य ; संबुद्ध ; आदिबुद्ध; नायक ; तायी ; अलातशांति ; धर्म (in the sense of living entity) अप्रधान (महायान) उच्छेद ; संघात ; अस्तिवस्तुत्ववादी (सर्वास्तिवादी) सोपलंभ, विज्ञान &c.

These words have the Buddhistic stamp on them and the word Buddha is used many a time in its direct reference to Gautama as well as to his followers. Sankara's interpretation of Buddha as *Brahmavid implies* the force of influence of his times.

(7) *Wherein does Vedanta differ from Buddhism ?*

In conclusion one point is to be specifically noted Although Gauda Pada bases his doctrine on the Vedic texts of the Mandukya Upanishad as Agama, he does not hide the influence of Buddhism on his mind. He admits that there is affinity in thought between the teaching of the Buddha and the Vedantic doctrine so far as the phenomenality of the world is concerned, but in one fundamental point the Vedanta goes one step further, *viz.,* the noumenon of the world is pure consciousness :—

क्रमते नहि बुद्धस्य ज्ञाने धर्मेषु तायिनः ।
सर्वेधर्मास्तथाज्ञानं नैतद् बुद्धेन भाषितम् (IV–99)

The similarity of Vedantic thought with Buddhistic thought thus lies in the denial of the Reality of the external world (*Bahyartha Nirakarana*) assertion of pure idealism (*Gnanamatra Kalpana*). But the independent ground work of the Vedanta lies in its Absolute Idealism (*Sthira Vijnana Vada*) as opposed to subjective in his theory inasmuch as he has undertaken the task of interpreting his doctrine from direct Upanishad Texts which were historically prior to the birth of the Buddha. But there are subconscious admissions of the force of Buddhistic teachings when he refutes Buddhistic Vijnana Vada.* Anyhow the Vedantic teaching of Gauda Pada of Buddhistic stamp impressed on the sub-conscious mind of Sankara could not be wiped off. Even a genius is the mind-born (*Manasa putra*) son of his time and Sankara was no exception to this truth. A genuine scholar of the Vedantic school should not take it as an insult that he has Buddhism in his intellectual texture just as a Modern University Graduate—however ultra-nationalist he may be—cannot disown the influence of English education.

ग्राह्यलक्षणसंयुक्तं न किंचिदिह विद्यते
विज्ञानपरिणामोऽयं तस्मात्सर्वः समीक्ष्नते
तेषामल्पापराधं तु दर्शनं यित्यतोक्तितः &c. तत्त्वसंग्रह. 329 330

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

THE whole world is seething with discontent to-day. The leaders of thought attribute it to various fundamental causes. Some trace it to class supremacy and the consequent economical and social disharmony, and others to the unbalanced political conditions of the world. A wise man would find that the reasons for this discontent are not so much economical, social, or political as ethical and spiritual. Great misery is inflicted on man by man himself. The fundamental problem of the world to-day is, therefore, ethical and spiritual.

India has perhaps the largest share in this discontent. To-day India is not the India of the Hindus only. Although they form the main bulk of the population, there are so many other religionists who also call this land their own motherland. The problem of India can never be solved unless and until proper cognizance is taken of all its religions. It is for us to think and ponder over the problem "What should be the attitude of the Hindus towards other religions without their deviating from the main principles of Hinduism ?"

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Of all the religions of the world, if there is one that is sufficiently catholic and can hold in its bosom all the different aspects of the one infinite Truth, it is Hinduism. It satisfies all natures and temperaments. It affords the largest scope for reason, emotion, and volition. It is not in conflict with any other religion on the face of the earth. If it is properly understood and lived, it can express wonderful power of assimilation. The history of the absorption of Buddhism bears eloquent testimony to this.

It is often believed that Hinduism is proselytising, but it is not proselytising in the sense that other religions are. It is not aggressive like them. Swami Vivekananda compared it to the fall of gentle dew-drops, silent and unseen, but bringing into blossom the fairest of flowers. Everyone who comes into contact with it is fascinated by its beauties and conquered by its truths. Therefore it is that Sir Oliver Lodge has remarked that Hinduism has been exercising a wide influence over several peoples from ancient times. Many aborigines in

India and outside have been converted to Hinduism. And even to day the assilmilation is going on. We are possibly certain that all the religions which have come into contact with Hinduism have been glorified by its touch. Mohammadanism, for instance, developed a great cult called Sufism as a result of the influence on it of Hinduism. In its nature, Sufism is not different from Hinduism or Vedanta. Even in Christianity, Vedantic thoughts are manifest, and the late Dr. James accepted in his book on Pragmatism that vedantic thoughts have entirely changed the view-points of Christianity. Schopenhauer paid a great tribute to the Vedanta philosophy by his celebrated saying, " There is no study more beneficial and elevating to mankind than the study of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, and it will be the solace of my death. " And Max Muller declares " If philosophy is meant to be a preparation for happy death or Euthanasia, I know of no better preparation for it than the Vedanta Philosophy, " while Scopenhauer's first disciple, Paul Deussen, writes : " God, the sole author of all good in us, is not, as in the Old Testament, a Being contrasted with and distinct from us, but rather...... our divine self. This and much more we may learn from the Upanishads : We shall learn the lesson if we are willing to put the finishing touch to the Christian consciousness, and to make it on all sides consistent and complete."

Eeven to day the thoughts of the Vedanta are a power in the world.

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What we want to-day in India is to bring about a better understanding between the followers of different religions who are living in it, to make them all feel their unity and live accordingly. It is regrettable that the average Hindu boy or even an elderly Hindu is ignorant of the principles of his own religion. It is being identified by ninety percent of our people with certain kinds of social customs such as eating, drinking, or going to the temples. So far as the practical side is concerned, the average Hindu does not live the spiritual life. The voice of the Vedas speaks of the unity of life and of the unity of purpose. In our practical life we have split up the beauty of this unity of the Supreme Being into millions of shreds and that is why we have become either selfish or suicidal in our conduct. We do not bring into practice the great truths of Vedanta. If we really know

the truths of our religion, we cannot feel any difference between ourselves and other religionists.

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The principal religions that exist to-day are Christianity, Judaism, Mohammadanism, Zorastrianism and Hinduism. It is absolutely certain that all the first four can be harmonised with the true spirit of the last which is based upon Vedanta. Zorastrianism is nothing but an off-shoot of Vedanta and it can be proved that it has nothing but the doctrines of Buddhism and Hinduism. Again there is nothing in Christianity that we have not in our religion. Even in the personality of Christ there is nothing that we have not in the great teachers of our own land.

The crudities of other religions would disappear when they are compared with the religion of the Vedas. Mohammadanism will be understood better when it is studied side by side with Vedanta. But it is a pity that many Mohammadans shrink from a comparison. Somehow or other they have developed the idea that their religion is supreme. Somehow or other the idea has been kept up that their religion is beyond all comparison and this view has produced a feeling of fanaticism among certain sects. But fanaticism can be broken by working slowly with love and faith in the truths of our own religion. For सत्यमेव जयति ना नृतम् Truth will conquer, and not untruth. The wisdom of the Vedas can never be falsified. We must take our stand on Truth and we are sure that Mohammadans can be reconciled with the Hindus and harmony brought about. There is a good deal of common culture between Hindus and Indian Mohammadans. The difference between them is not so marked as that between the Hindus and Arabic or Turkish Mohammadans. There are some peculiar traits of the Indian mind, and the Indian Mohammadans have not lost them as ninety per cent of them are converts. Their fore-fathers were Hindus and the Hindu blood is still in their veins. We have only to appeal to them and response will surely come.

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What is absolutely essential is that we should be first well established in our own faith and work with love. It is with love and faith that Mahatma Gandhi has achieved a remarkable degree of success in this respect. You must first believe yourself that there is only one life and this feeling will

work upon the minds of others and harmony will be restored. *It is well known that great Hindu sages were approached by* Mohammadans for the study and practice of religion. Kabir was acknowledged by both the communities as a man of God-realization and true Mohammadan saints were followed by the Hindus as well. So what is wanted is only the living of a truly spiritual life. The average Hindu is rather weak in his faith ; but even a low class Mohammadan sincerely believes that a 'Kafir' can one day be converted into Mohammadanism.

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In modern times, no nation can live all by itself. In ancient days we used to enjoy peace and plenty because there were no chances of onslaught. As the foreigners have begun to invade our motherland, we have to change our relationship with them. The Hindus have never gone out like other conquering nations because they know that their greatness lies not in robbing their neighbours and that the ideal of life is the development of character and the realization of the Self.

Though the Hindus did not go out for conquest of other lands they did go out in days of yore for conquest of the world by Indian thought. Even in the pre-Buddhistic period, the Brahmins went out to spread their culture and philosophy. Long before the dawn of Greek, Egyptian and Phoenician civilisations, India had begun to play a very important part in moulding the world-thought. In China the missionaries of India contributed not a little to the development of the ethical culture in Buddhistic times. Buddhist missionaries went out to Mexico, Africa and the whole of Asia, and spread the ethical culture of India.

If we Hindus can ever maintain our position to-day, we can do so only in one of two ways. At present our place is very low in the eyes of the outside world on account of our political disabilities. Many political leaders of our country view the Indian problem from a western stand-point. They think that the best course of development of national life is to follow in the footsteps of western nations and achieve freedom by western methods. If the west has come to conquer the east with all its brute force strengthened by science and all its national resources mobilised for the purpose of exploitation, we must either devolop our brute power in order to withstand them, that is become bigger brutes to vanquish them ; or try to metamorphose them and deprive them of their brute

nature by raising them from man the brute into man the divine. No one who knows a little about modern India can ever hope to devolop such organisations and put forth such concentrated energy towards the achievement of the goal as the westerners have done. We are absolutely lacking in unity of action and the power of organisation. How can we cope with the westerners possessing machine-guns and æroplanes in the battle for life and freedom ? It must be remembered that we have not developed the qualities of the west because it is not in our blood to become brutes. There is no doubt a slumber has come upon us, but not death. If the Hindus were to die, then, with them will die all that is great and noble in the world. If there is any country in the world to-day where a perfectly spiritual life can be lived, it is India. There lies the glory of our motherland in spite of decadence. Those who have left the Indian shores for other lands can bear testimony to this. India must therefore live and it has still a vision. To destroy our vision, to become brutes, to come down to the level of a marauder is not in our blood. We have several thousands of years behind our back. Our national *samskaras* cannot be changed all on a sudden, because they have become our second nature. So far as the outside world is concerned, our policy must be to metamorphose the brute in man with the spiritual force of our country.

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But, however, in spite of weaknesses and defects, the average westerner is most practical and lives his life most intensely. Whatever he may take up, he clings to it with dogged pertinacity. This is wanting in our country. We shirk our responsibilities. We have no grit, no steadfastness. We turn our faces away from any difficult path leading to the goal. Suppose one wants money. If somebody dies leaving a hoard, he will be glad to take it. This is the slothful attitude of an average Indian. We want somebody to do everything for us. But bear in mind that without exertion nothing can be achieved. It is through their wonderful energy that the westerners have brought their civilisation to its present condition. Even in the spiritual life for which they have little or no tendency, if you once win their hearts, you will find that they stick to their guns to the very last.

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It is often feared that it is impossible to change the mentality of the westerner. His mind is aggressive and

powerful, and if we are not strong and powerful ourselves, he will not appreciate us, though this is a fact that speaks well in his favour. But, however, by developing our *sattvic* nature it is possible to defeat his *rajasic* nature. Our conquest will not be of the body but of the mind and soul.

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For this, India must supply an army of great workers who are men of pure renunciation having no thought of their own interest and entirely dedicating themselves at the altar of our motherland. Supreme self-sacrifice is absolutely necessary. As a soldier goes out to battle on behalf of his motherland for the sake of its glory, we also must go out for the conquest of the world by spirituality. If we cannot sacrifice the little comforts of the homelife for the sake of our country, we are not worth the salvation we are hankering after . Our blood must boil with the ideal of self-abnegation. No half-hearted man can serve his country. We want men who are strong in determination, full of vigour, and of keen intellect. The great Emperor Asoka once raised an army of Bhikshus and sent them over to the different parts of the world. A similar army of noble souls should go to the west and revolutionise its thought. There is a great demand from outside our land for teachers of true religion—from America, Germany, France and other parts of Europe. The Hindu society should rise equal to the occasion by sending such teachers.

Tremendous power has to be conserved in ourselves and utilised for strengthening and invigorating our activity. Every one in our country should ask himself in this wise : " Am I not the descendant of the ancient Rishis ? Have I forgotten the glory of my religion ? I belong to such and such Gotra. But do I believe really in the blood of the Rishis that is in my veins and have I real love for my country ?" When the question of sacrifice comes many may hesitate. But they must fill themselves with love for their country and religion. When Swami Vivekananda was once the guest of an American millonaire, he was given a couch to lie on, which was so soft that even princes might envy. But when he was sitting on it, the picture of the dire poverty of his land came to his mind. He could not sleep on it and had to come down on the floor to enjoy peace. Such was his burning patriotism ! It is the duty of the young men to emulate his example of self-sacrifice.

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True democracy can have a basis only on the spiritual unity of life. If the democratic people of the west are convinced of this truth, they will be able to arrive at the solution of most of their complicated problems upon which depends the salvation of their own people as well as that of others. It is high time that the Hindus devoloped in them not merely a passive consciousness of their religion but a living dynamic faith.

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Swami Vivekananda preached what he called dynamic religion. It was he who made Hinduism alive to the needs of India and the world. He knew that India's line of action and path of salvation lie through that. The salvation of India is not political but can come only through dynamic religion which will spread our culture and spirituality and enable man to unfold to the best of his powers the divinity within him.

At the present day Indians go to the west as students or as beggars. A student can learn, but a beggar is always treated with contempt. Indians must have something to give before they go there. If we can teach the foreigners the life-giving truths of religion, we will be raising ourselves in their estimation. The sooner India follows this advice of Swami Vivekananda, the quicker will come the salvation of our motherland.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Hindu College for Batticaloa

A conference of the Hindus of Batticaloa District was held on Friday the 10th May at the Vivekananda Hall, Kalladi-Uppodai, to consider the educational needs of the Hindu community of the Batticaloa District. The meeting began with prayers and Mr. V. C. M. Aiyadurai was voted to the chair. Mr. N. Seenitamby was elected Secretary *pro tem.* The Chairman explained the object of the conference and called upon Swami Vipulananda to address the meeting. The Swami, in a short and lucid speech, explained the necessity of establishing at Batticaloa a first grade educational institution which would give as much attention to religious training as to secular instruction and which would afford its pupils all the facilities necessary for obtaining a good secondary education. The Swami's address was followed by other speeches and the Chairman in his closing remarks pointed out that it was fortunate for Batticaloa that the Swami, who is a graduate of the University of London, a reputed Tamil scholar and educationalist has offered his services to work for the promotion of education in his native land and that the Hindus would do well not to lose the present golden opportunity for supplying a long felt want of Batticaloa District. The conference resolved to establish at Kalladi a first grade Hindu College equiped with all modern requirements and having in its own grounds a shrine for worship, spacious dormitories, laboratories and playgrounds. It was also resolved to establish at Batticaloa a branch of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. Two leading Hindu gentlemen of Kalladi-Uppodai : Messrs. N. K. Nallatamby and N. S. Selvadurai promised to donate twenty-five acres of land for the aforesaid educational purpose. An executive committee consisting of Srimath Swami Vipulananda (President), Mr. N. K. Nallatamby (Vice-President), Messrs. K. S. Chandrasekaram Pillai and Seenitamby (Joint Secretaries), and Messrs. M. Chenniah, T. Sangara Pillai, K. O. Velu Pillai, N. S. Selvadurai, S. O. Ratnasingam, K. Kanagasabey, P. Kanagasabey, N. M. Masilamany, S. W. Arambamoorthy and N. K. Kasipathi Pillai was formed to carry out the objects of the conference. An advisory board representative of the whole of the Batticaloa District was also formed. The meeting terminated with prayers.

Vernacular Title Examination.

The Nikhil Bharat Sahitya Sangha, Sova Bazaar Street, Calcutta, have issued a circular letter outlining a scheme of examinations in the Vernaculars. The promoters of the scheme explain the underlying object in the following words :—

" The study of the different Indian Vernaculars is essentially necessary for the mutual understanding and appreciation of the different peoples of India with a view to the gradual spread of an uniform standard of culture and a common aim and aspiration of life. This purpose can best be attained by stimulating a healthy desire for studying the vernaculars, among the youth of the country. A system of

examination with prizes, medals and diplomas offered is calculated to help society materially in the attainment of its objects. For this purpose a special title examination will be held. The subjects of examination are :—Ramayan, Mahabharat, Ayurveda, Rajasthan, Original Composition, Story and Novel Writing, Four Vedas, Six Darshanas, Navya Nyaya, Astronomy, Bhagabat, Bhagabat-Gita, Mahanirvanatantra, Mahammadan Literautres, Buddhist Literatures, Mental Healing, Jain Literature. Titles are :—Kavyanidhi, Puratawabhushan, Vidyabhushan, Tatwanidhi, Vidyavisharad, Nyayapisharad, Vedanta-Jainasiromani, Jainashastrapisharad, Vidyavinode, Imamu-Ulamail-Moyar-rikhin, Imamu-Ulamail-Muhaddichhin, Imamu-Ulamail-Mufaschherin-Koran, Vidyabhachaspati, Tantraratna, Yogavidyavisharad, Samkhyavisharad, Kaviratna, Ayurvedashastri, Saraswati, Bharati, etc. Students, teachers and any one whether male or female may appear in the examination at the same time from their respective houses without appearing in any particular centre. Four months' time will be given for answering the paper. (There are Thesis Examinations). Candidates are required to answer in any one of the following languages :—Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, Guzrati, Marathi, Gurumukhi, Sindhi, Telegu, Tamil, Canarese, Arabic Malayalam, Oriya, Urdu, Assamese, Maithili, Nepali, Pali, Burmese, Ceylonese, English. Successful candidates will be awarded rewards besides their title according to merits. The examination fee for every subject is Rs. 10 only. Honorary titles are also conferred on the authors, writers of weekly and monthly papers, Alopathic, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic Physicians, Artists and Songsters of examining their productions (Fee Rs. 50 only). All correspondence should be made in English.

For particulars apply to :—

Jnanendra Kumar Kavyarnab, Vedantaratna, Secretary, "The Nikhil Bharat Sahitya Sangha," Sovabazaar Street, Calcutta.
with one anna stamp for postage.

The objects which the promoters have in view are indeed laudable. It is a pity that they have not indicated in the circular, the lines on which it is sought to attain a high standard of cultural unity in this country. Is it merely holding examinations and awarding titles and prizes ? We wish the promoters will give us more details in order that we may give a considered opinion on the merits of the scheme.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASRAM—Charitable hospital and dispensary, Rangoon.

We have perused with great interest the report of the Sevasram for 1924. During the year under report, 75,241 patients, mostly of the poor and labouring classes of all religious denominations and nationalities, had medical treatment in the Asram ; of these, 74,338 males 48,355, females 25,773 were attended to in the dispensary ; the remaining 1,113 patients being housed and treated in the hospital. The year opened with a cash balance of Rs. 418-3-6 ; Rs. 14,922-12-9 were received by way of donations and Rs. 7,914-10-0 by subscriptions. The total receipts during

the year, including a loan receipt of Rs. 1,857 and the cash balance of 1923, was Rs. 25,274-14-3 of which Rs. 23,291-9-3 was expended leaving a balance of Rs.1,983-5-0 at the end of the year. It is very gratifying to know that the relief afforded by the hospital to the deserving poor of all communities is much appreciated by the public. Sir Harcourt Butler, the Governor of Burma, who is the patron of the institution, has, after a visit to the hospital during the year recorded his high appreciation of the splendid work done by it. From the Visitors' Notes printed in the report, we are pleased to note a loving tribute to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital by a Christian Divine, Dr. Wm. H. Drummond. We make no apology for quoting his appreciation .—" It is a true home of the spirit of service, speaking the deep truths of universal religion not by words but by realising them in life. Many hospitals much more richly endowed may learn here that in the work of healing, love and faith and unfailing kindness must always have the chief place. It will be a great loss to Rangoon if any part of the hospital has to be closed for want of funds." We feel that such a good institution deserves to be better supported financially than it has been. It is labouring under some pressing inadequacies which require early removal. There is no properly equipped operation theatre or dressing room and it lacks clinical equipment, all due to its inadequate financial position, which we trust, will soon improve.

The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

The twenty-fourth annual report of the institution for 1924, which we have just received, is a record of satisfactory progress all round. The ideal of service is the most predominant feature of the home and that service free and ungrudgingly to all who seek the shelter of the Home, without distinction of caste or religion. The hospital attached to the Home housed, during the year, 1,302 in-patients, while in the out-door dispensary, so many as 14,784 patients were treated. Besides providing medical aid, several people who were actually stranded in Benares were helped with the necessaries of life without which timely help the consequences to them would have been disastrous.

The Home of Service has other lines of activity. For instance, there is a Home for male invalids who come to spend their last days in Benares but who through improvidence or the unforeseen circumstances are unable to meet their expenses. The Home provides food and shelter in really deserving cases. The Home provides a refuge for widows and female invalids, and acts as guardian to poor boys and girls of respectable families but without proper guardians or in constant danger of yielding to temptation. To save such boys and girls from being corrupted and to help them grow up as useful men or women they are carefully looked after in the Home. There is also a spinning and weaving department, conducted by expert workers, in which the inmates of the Home as well as outside boys are taught useful handicrafts. In these and other directions, the Home can justly claim to have given a good account of itself during the year. It is

gratifying to note that the public has helped the Home most generously. Every line of development in the public service means more and more money and we have no doubt that the splendid service rendered by the Home will evoke generous response from the charitably-minded public and we sincerely echo the hope expressed in the report that the current year will show better result in all directions.

SRI SATCHIDANANDA SANGHA :—The Sangha which was established in 1919 in memory of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, with the object of stimulating the study of Vedanta in its universal aspect and to cultivate the practices of Karma, Bhakthi, Yoga and Gnana among its members, has just issued its report for the year ending September, 1924, which affords interesting reading. The membership of the Sangha has increased during the year under report from 83 to 95. The finances of the Sangha also show an increase, the total receipts during the year under review, including the previous year's balance, amounting to Rs. 1,228-10-10, as against Rs. 853-15-7 for the last year. The expenditure during the year amounted to Rs. 607-11-4, leaving a balance of Rs. 615-15-6.

The weekly religious classes were well attended. A Conference of Religions was held for the second time at Madras during the Christmas of 1923, with the object of attaining the realisation of the ideal of harmony of religions. All the principal religions were represented at the Conference by their respective exponents. The Sangha deserves to be congratulated on the success of the Conference which provided a common platform on which a Hindu, a Muhammadan, a Christian, a Buddhist and a Parsi embraced one another as members of the great family of humanity, realising the unity underlying the diverse faiths in the world.

The Sangha is in need of a permanent habitation and it appeals to the generous public to help it to have a building of its own. We heartily commend the appeal of the Sangha for support.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

FOREST MEDITATION AND OTHER POEMS, by James H. Cousins. (Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, 1925).

A collection of delightful verses, artistic and of high quality as may be expected from a poet of Dr. Cousins' high standing and reputation in the literary world. The poems reveal that Dr. Cousins is a poet of nature. Common objects, the woodland, the stream and a hundred other things of the countryside have a fascination for him. "I sing of waters, winds and trees—Ah no ! I do not sing of these" ; but "the Spirit mixed in mortal things. She sings no passing wind or tree ; She sings their haunting mystery." That is the theme of the poems. He sees God in the nature around us :

> "*Man (in God's image) grovelling goes*
> After dull earthy ends,
> While delicately on a rose
> A shining beetle feeds."